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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2004

BUDGET COMMITTEE

**EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
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**RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SENIOR DEMOCRAT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
MINERAL RESOURCES**

**The Honorable Colin L. Powell
Secretary
Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520**

Dear Secretary Powell:

I want to express my support for the U.S. State Department's recent actions to engage in a resettlement program for Lao/Hmong refugees currently living at Wat Tham Krabok in Thailand. As a member of Congress representing a large Lao/Hmong population in western Wisconsin, I have spoken to many constituents concerned about this resettlement and its potential impact on their family members.

It is my understanding that approximately 15,000 Lao/Hmong refugees living at Wat Tham Krabok have been registered with the Thai government as of August 2003, and will be eligible to apply for resettlement to the United States through this program. The major concern shared by many of my constituents is the limitation of this resettlement program to only those Lao/Hmong refugees living and registered at Wat Tham Krabok.

The significant difficulties of trying to assess and register all potential Lao/Hmong refugees in Thailand are understandable. However, my constituents advocate that those individuals throughout Thailand who are able to demonstrate refugees status should have the opportunity to participate in the resettlement program. I join my constituents in urging the United States government to try to accommodate as many verified Lao/Hmong refugees who desire to resettle in the United States as possible. Keeping families together and opening doors to Lao/Hmong veterans who served alongside United States forces in Southeast Asia during the 1960's and 1970's, and their families, is important to my constituents in Wisconsin and consistent with American values.

As you know, instituting a comprehensive, inclusive, and fair program for the potential resettlement of Lao/Hmong refugees to the United States is a top priority. I look forward to working with you to ensure these concerns of the Hmong community in Wisconsin are addressed, and that the resettlement program is successful.

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EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701
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Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the issues discussed above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Kind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

RK:bp